

Please amend the application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A hard boiled candy composition comprising:

(a) a confectionery base comprised of a mixture of at least one sugar and at least one carbohydrate bulking agent which is kept in an amorphous or glassy condition;

(b) at least one botanical selected from the group consisting of Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginko Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian and Ephedra, and combinations thereof, each having an unpleasant mouthfeel; and,

(c) an amount of from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition of an unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent consisting essentially of one or more partially hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fats, said amount being effective to suppress said unpleasant mouthfeel of said botanical.

Claim 2 (cancel): The candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the botanical is selected from the group consisting of Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginko Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian and Ephedra, and combinations thereof.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 2 wherein the botanical is Echinacea.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is selected from the group consisting of cottonseed, soybean, peanut, palm, sunflower seed and corn oil and combinations thereof. ~~and the saturated fat is selected from the group consisting of palm kernel oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter, and butter, and combinations thereof.~~

Claim 5 (cancel): The candy composition according to claim 4 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is selected from the group consisting of partially hydrogenated cottonseed oil, palm kernel oil, and butter, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.5% to 3.5% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.75% to 3.0% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil to the botanical is from about 1/1 to about 1/.01.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 8 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated oil to the botanical is from 1.0/0.6 to 1.0/0.15.

Claim 10-27 (withdrawn):

Claim 28: (currently amended): A method for suppressing the unpleasant mouthfeel of a hard boiled candy composition which contains a botanical having an unpleasant mouthfeel, which comprises:

(a) providing a confectionery base comprised of a mixture of at least one sugar and at least one carbohydrate bulking agent which is kept in an amorphous or glassy condition and a botanical selected from the group consisting of Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Gingko Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian and Ephedra, and combinations thereof, each having an unpleasant mouthfeel, and,

(b) adding thereto from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition of an unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent consisting essentially of one or more partially hydrogenated vegetable oils or

saturated fats said amount being effective to suppress said unpleasant mouthfeel of said botanical.

Claim 29 (cancelled): The method according to claim 28 wherein the botanical is selected from the group consisting of Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginkgo Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian and Ephedra, and combinations thereof.

Claim 30 (original): The method according to claim 29 wherein the botanical is Echinacea.

Claim 31 (currently amended): The method according to claim 28 wherein the partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is selected from the group consisting of cottonseed, soybean, peanut, palm, sunflower seed ~~or~~ and corn oil, and mixtures thereof, ~~and the saturated fat is palm kernel oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter, and butter and mixtures thereof.~~

Claim 32 (cancel): The method according to claim 31 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is selected from the group consisting of partially cottonseed oil, palm kernel oil, and butter, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 33 (currently amended): The method according to claim 28 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.5% to 3.5% by weight of the hard boiled candy composition.

Claim 34 (currently amended): The method according to claim 33 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.75% to 3.0% by weight of the hard boiled candy composition.

Claim 35 (original): The method according to claim 28 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil to the botanical is from about 1/1 to about 1/0.1.

Claim 36 (original): The method according to claim 35 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil to the botanical is from 1.0/0.6 to 1.0/0.15.

Claims 37 – 45 (canceled).

Claim 46 -- 54 (withdrawn).

Claim 55 (currently amended): A hard boiled candy composition consisting essentially of:

(a) a confectionery base comprised of a mixture of at least one sugar and at least one carbohydrate bulking agent which is kept in an amorphous or glassy condition;

(b) at least one botanical selected from the group consisting of Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginkgo Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian and Ephedra, and combinations thereof, each having an unpleasant mouthfeel; and

(c) an unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent consisting essentially of from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition of one or more partially hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fats, said amount being effective to suppress said unpleasant mouthfeel of said botanical.

Claim 56 (new): The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the saturated fat is selected from the group consisting of palm kernel oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter, and butter and combinations thereof.

Claim 57 (new): The method according to claim 28 wherein the saturated fat is selected from the group consisting of palm kernel oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter, and butter and combinations thereof.